

2 Kings 21

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Date: 11 December 2024

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[0 : 00] Take your Bibles and let's go to 2 Kings 21. 2 Kings chapter 21. We'll see how far we get into the text. We're in 2 Kings 21.

I wanted to look at the entire chapter. I do not think that we will get into the entire chapter. We will probably read just through... Well, let's just see.

Let's just see how far. We may read more than we get into, okay? But let's get into the text. Let's pray together and then we'll get into it one another. Father, thank you so much.

Thank you for the day. Thank you for the glorious opportunity we have of gathering together. We just praise you for your faithfulness and your goodness towards us. Thank you that we have the opportunity to come together as a church family.

To minister to one another. Lord, we thank you for the opportunity we have to open up Scripture and pray that you would speak to us through it. And may we draw closer to you by what we understand and what we come to know of it and of you.

[0 : 58] And we ask it all in Christ's name. Amen. I know I mentioned this before I prayed over the meal. Some of you weren't here. I'll go ahead and start with just extending thanks.

I will continue to do that. If you go through those glass doors back there, there are three rooms that are just full of gifts. Some of you have been back there. You've seen it. We have had the opportunity.

I think our number is around 60 now of kids that we are being able to minister to with you guys and others that are partnering with us. So there's a lot that's going on there.

But just continue to pray that the testimony just continues to resonate. Because our desire is not that they would say, oh, look what those people can do. But it's look what that church, look what those followers of Christ can do.

So it's always wonderful. When the school gives us something, it doesn't have my name on it, your name on it. It has the church's name on it. And it comes to us. And they're trusting the church would meet those needs.

[1 : 55] So that's a wonderful thing. So thank you for that. Thank you for just being the hands and feet there. And let's get into our text. Chapter 21. 2 Kings chapter 21.

Manasseh was 12 years old when he became king. And he reigned 55 years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hephzibah. He did evil in the sight of the Lord according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord dispossessed before the sons of Israel.

For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed. And he erected altars for Baal and made an Asherah as Ahab king of Israel had done.

And he worshipped all the hosts of heaven and served them. He built altars in the house of the Lord on which the Lord had said, In Jerusalem I will put my name. For he built altars for all the hosts of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord.

He made his son pass through the fire, practiced witchcraft, and used divination, and dealt with mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the Lord provoking him to anger.

[2 : 57] Then he set the carved image of Asherah that he had made in the house of which the Lord had said to David and to his son Solomon, In this house and in Jerusalem which I have chosen from all the tribes of Israel, I will put my name forever.

And I will not make the feet of Israel wonder any more from the land which I gave their fathers. If only they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them.

But they did not listen. And Manasseh seduced them to do evil more than the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the sons of Israel. Now the Lord spoke through his servants the prophets,

saying, Because Manasseh, king of Judah, has done these abominations, having done wickedly more than all the Amorites who did who were before him, and has also made Judah sin with his idols.

Therefore, thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such calamity on Jerusalem and Judah, that whoever hears of it, both his ears will tingle. I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab, and I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down.

I will abandon the remnant of my inheritance and deliver them into the hand of their enemies, and they will become as plunder and spoil to all their enemies, because they have done evil in my sight, and have been provoking me to anger since the day their fathers came from Egypt, even to this day.

[4 : 25] Moreover, Manasseh shed very much innocent blood, until he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another. Manasseh, besides his sin which he made Judah sin, in doing evil in the sight of the Lord.

Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and all that he did, and his sin which he committed, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And Manasseh slept with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzzah, and Amon his son became king in his place.

Amon was 22 years old when he became king, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Mushalema, the daughter of Haraz of Joppa. He did evil in the sight of the Lord, as Manasseh his father had done.

For he walked in all the way that his father had walked, and served the idols that his father had served, and worshipped them. So he forsook the Lord, the God of his fathers, and did not walk in the way of the Lord. The servants of Amon conspired against him, and killed the king in his own house.

And the people of the land killed all those who conspired against King Amon. And the people of the land made Josiah, his son, king in his place. Now the rest of the acts of Amon, which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

[5 : 34] He was buried in his grave in the garden of Uzzah, and Josiah, his son, became king in his place. We read it in its entirety. Let's see how far we can get into it. I want you to see Manasseh, the tipping point of judgment.

The tipping point of judgment. The most righteous king that Judah has, apart from David, after David's reign, during the time of the divided kingdom, is without a doubt Hezekiah.

The most wicked king that Judah has, after the kingdom is divided, is Hezekiah's son, Manasseh. It is really astounding how the father could do so much that was right, and the son do so much that was wrong.

We go very quickly from the most righteous to the most wicked. And if you were to open up scripture and you were to study it, we know that we can find the parallel passage to this found in the book of 2 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles chapter 33.

You'll need to write that down because much of what I tell you tonight, I want you to go there and check it out as well. I don't want you just to take my word for it, but I'm not going to ask you to turn to it. So 2 Chronicles chapter 33. If you were to go just a couple more chapters over, which we will get to in due time, and we will get to the 24th chapter of 2 Kings, we will understand that the reason for the deportation of the nation of Judah to the Babylonian captivity is because of the sin of Manasseh.

[6 : 57] If you were to turn to the book of Jeremiah, Jeremiah chapter 15, in Jeremiah 15, you will find that the Lord God tells Jeremiah not to even listen to the people because he has already decided to deport them out of their land because of the sin of Manasseh.

So what I'm saying is that he is the tipping point and he's the reason. You need to also understand that it's about 100 years after his reign in which they are deported. So he's the tipping point.

It's not like it happens immediately, but he is the one that over a century later in which the tribe of Judah falls or the nation of Judah falls and they're being carried away by Nebuchadnezzar and all of his Nebuchadnezzar, his military might and all the leaders, whenever they're leaving, over 100 years later, it is because of the sin of Manasseh.

Now I say he's the tipping point because he goes so far that there's no coming back. I'll go ahead and tell you, I'll tell you before we get to it, Josiah is a good king, but his father, Manasseh, has

taken them so far, his grandfather, Manasseh, there's no going back.

Okay? So he is the tipping point of judgment. How do we get to this point? And I know I'm going quickly and I know I'm throwing a lot of information at you quickly. I'm trying to do it for the sake of time and I don't think this text does really good if you divide it up too much, if you break it up in points, okay?

[8 : 29] So how do we get to this point? Number one, we see, I forget that thing's there, brother. I'm sorry. I'm trying to be still, okay? It's the columns in this room that mess with me. So it makes me want to bob and weave and some of you know that and you hide behind it and it messes with me even more.

But anyway, stay focused. How do we get to this? Number one, we see the example forsaken. It tells us, it says that after Hezekiah died, in those days Hezekiah died, that Manasseh, his son, became king in his place.

Manasseh was 12 years old when he became king. It is the example forsaken. I've already told you that Hezekiah is the most righteous king apart from David that Judah has.

He was a testimony to so much good. He also had the testimony of his own life of how God humbles you and how God can answer prayer, how God can deliver you.

But there's more to it than what we see on face value. A number of Bible scholars, now the division goes a little bit like this. And you have to do a lot of math if you want to keep up with this.

[9 : 32] And I'm not going to take you through all of it. Because if we were to look at this and say he was 12 years old, okay, that well, when Hezekiah, his father, was delivered from his sickness, he was promised 15 more years. So it was three years after his sickness that Manasseh was born and therefore he was born on the good side, right?

That's how it seems to read. But if we were to do the math and we were to add up the number of years in which Manasseh reigns and we were to add up a number of years that each successive king reigns and we were to add up the number of years before they did their deportation into Babylonian captivity, what we will find is there's an extra 10 years.

Okay, so a number of Bible scholars, and I believe they are accurate, will tell you that more than likely Manasseh was born before Hezekiah was delivered.

He would have been about, hello, young lady, he would have been about 7 years old when his dad became sick. He would have been old enough to understand the answer to prayer. He would have been 8 years old when the Lord slew 185,000 Assyrians in one night.

And the way that we reconcile this time is that his father made him co-regent for the last 10 years of his reign. That's where the extra 10 years come from.

[10 : 46] And think about it. If you are Hezekiah, you know you have 15 years to live. Five years passes, your son is now 12, wouldn't you want to have him as co-regent knowing he is going to be the next king?

Many people believe, and I'm one of them, that he reigned for 10 years alongside the most righteous king of the divided kingdom. But oh, how quickly we move away from that.

See, not only did he have the example lived out in front of him, he also had the example of reigning beside him. But if we go a little bit further, it tells us that he did all the wickedness as the nations whom the Lord deported from among them or disposed among them.

So he had also the bad examples. He did everything the Amorites did. He did everything that Ahab done. He did everything that everyone else did. All these have a common denominator by the time that Manasseh starts his reign.

All these had been disciplined and removed from the land by the Lord. So either he's calling the Lord God's bluff or he's not paying attention to history.

[11 : 55] When we read scripture, it is almost clearly portrayed for us that Manasseh is doing the very things that the nations whom the Lord dispossessed from the land were doing.

And if God disciplined them, again, you've got to understand your Bible history in this way, why did God give the promised land to the nation of Israel? Was he just being mean and saying, oh, here's some land over here.

We're going to get rid of these people who are living there and I'm going to give you the land. No, it's because God had been patient with the land. Long before they went in to take the land captivity, Abram had sojourned in that land and went to and fro, walked here and there and built altars and called upon the name of the Lord.

Go back and read it in Genesis. It's amazing, right? Everything's in Genesis. That's why it's the beginning. So we go back and we read in Genesis, right? Abram is walking around this land, building altars, calling on the name of the Lord. What does calling on the name of the Lord mean? He's preaching. So he's going all throughout this land. He's preaching, he's preaching, he's preaching, he's preaching, he's preaching, he's preaching. Everywhere he goes, he builds an altar and he preaches. He declares the goodness and greatness of this God who's called him.

[12:57] And then they go into captivity. So for 430 years, God's patient. They heard the message. They had time to repent. 430 years later, what are they doing?

They're doing child sacrifices. They're worshiping the stars of heaven. They're burning, you know, this incense and all these other things. So God sends the nation of Israel as his instrument of judgment for their rebellion to the message they heard.

Now, what is astounding is that his own people are doing the same thing. Pay attention to the examples. Why did God tell the nation of Israel when they came out of the Egyptian captivity to put these words in their heart?

Why were the kings told to read the whole Pentateuch, right? They were to memorize the book of Deuteronomy. They were to write it. The kings, God commands them when they come into the land. God commanded them. They were to make a hand copy of the first five books of the Bible. Do you know the very first book they would have copied? Genesis, right? Do you know what they would have found in Genesis?

[13:59] Oh, wait a minute. God gave opportunity. They didn't repent. He disciplines those who rebel. When we don't heed the warnings and we forsake the examples, we're doomed to walk in rebellion.

We see this, the example forsaken. Not only did he forsake the good example of his father, he forsook the terrible example. I mean, he's doing what Ahab did.

Samaria is gone. Right? If he thinks that God won't discipline then he has really no grounds to stand on there. We have the example forsaken.

Number two, we see the extent of his reign. Do you know that Manasseh is the longest reigning king of Judah? 55 years he reigns.

So the major question, why would God let such a wicked king reign so long? Right? What about Hezekiah?

[15:04] Why didn't he tell Hezekiah, well you've got 20 or 25 years left in your life. Why did he limit it to 15? Why would God let such a wicked king? If evil exists, can't God stop it? Right? It's the same old argument that we have today.

Isn't God big enough to stop it? Isn't God big enough to intervene? I mean, we read everything that's going on here. Not only is he worshiping the bells, he's building the ashes, which are sacred poles, he's going into the temple of the Lord and in the outer court and in the inner court he has set up these altars to worship all the stars of heaven.

That's what it says. So they have all this star worship, the celestial worship. They're doing everything that at this point had not been done by any Israelite up until this time. He's also causing his son to pass through the fire.

There are a lot of people who say it and want to say it one way and say it this other way. Really the only way of saying it is that's child sacrifice, right? He's causing his son to pass through the fire. He's doing any of these number of things.

He's using sorcery and divination and wickedness and witchcraft and everything. All these matters that are going on. Yet he's the longest reigning king in Judah. Why? Why would God allow such wickedness to prevail?

[16:11] Well I think the key to that why is found in our text. That's why I had to read the entire text and it tells us in verse 15. When the Lord is declaring through his prophets because they have done evil in my sight and have been provoking me to anger look at this since the day they left Egypt.

Do you notice this? Manasseh is not the fullness of the rebellion against God. He's the pinnacle of the rebellion against God.

He is only doing to the greatest extent what everybody else has been doing since they came out of Egypt. You want a New Testament way of saying it? Paul says in the book of Romans and God gave them over to a debased mind.

You know the scariest thing in scripture that I have found is when God lets man have his own way and God gave them over and God gave them over.

Why did Manasseh reign 55 years? Because God let them have their way. And you see where it took them. He gave them over.

[17:26] He didn't stop it. Did he cause it? No. He is not the author of sin. Did he permit it? Absolutely. How did he permit it? By letting them have their way. Now you need to know 2 Chronicles chapter 33.

God did intervene in Manasseh's life. This is important. Pay attention to this. We're only told this by the chronicler. Typically the chronicler and writing 1 and 2 Chronicles you need to also understand this.

And it's biblical so we say it has the authoritativeness of scripture with it so we're not discounting it. But we see the house of David in a better light in Chronicles.

Right? Because we're looking at after captivity and how God was faithful. So we see a little bit more details there. That's why you need to get a full picture of what's going on. So it tells us in Chronicles that the wickedness of Manasseh finally gets so far that God intervenes and he sends the Assyrian king and the Assyrian king puts a ring in his nose and a chain around his neck and leads him to Babylon which is really wild because Assyria should be leading him to Nineveh.

But he doesn't. He leads him to Babylon. He takes him into the Babylonian region. The kingdom of Babylon is just now starting to arise. The Assyrians are on the downfall and it's kind of a foreshadow of the captivity they will go there.

[18:37] But what happens is when Manasseh gets there he realizes I'm not as strong as I thought I was and it says he repents and he cries out and he calls out and God has favor on Manasseh and he sets him free and grants him favor in the sight of the king and he's permitted to go back to Jerusalem and reign and he comes back and he cleanses the temple and he does all this.

Some people call him a trophy of God's grace. Be careful there. He cleanses the temple. He takes down the altars and he tells people we have to worship the Lord. We know because God got my attention. I was carried away and we need to do this and he tries to restore that.

We'll get to that in just a moment. Okay? So you need to know that God does intervene but how far did he go before he intervened? It tells us here that he killed many innocent people and because of the blood it tells us also in the 24th chapter that the blood ran deep through Jerusalem.

Most historians would agree that Manasseh killed Isaiah. You go to the book of Isaiah there is no prophecy during the days of Manasseh. Why?

You remember one thing about Isaiah. Isaiah frequented the courts of the kings and was the prophet of the coming king and then there was a king who didn't like the prophet of the coming king.

[19:50] The historical record goes that he put Isaiah in a hollow log and sawed him in two. And many of the servants of the Lord the prophets that were sent to him to declare the warnings they were slain and they were killed.

Why? Because of the wickedness of this one man. Tipping point of judgment. He said oh but praise be to God he repented. And we do praise God for his mercy and his grace.

We thank him that we can read 2 Chronicles and we can see that God does give grace and mercy and restoration but don't discount this sin because of our last thing. The last thing that we see is the example forsaken the extent of his reign the enduring impact of his sin.

So we don't have it in our text here but it's a part of the text because you have to go to 2 Chronicles to see it. When Manasseh comes back from Babylon he takes the fake altars out of the temple he takes the asher down he tells everybody hey just worship the Lord only don't worship anybody else but the Lord and he makes that command and he tries to make up for all of his failures.

But friend listen to me we will never in our own abilities and our own efforts be able to restore what we have taken an unbelievable amount of energy to destroy.

[21:19] Manasseh had committed his reign to destroying this worship through his actions and through his behaviors and then in the final days of his life tried to restore it. But what do we find? That when he dies his son Amon by the way Amon is a derivative of a false god from Egypt he named his son after a false god and that son what does it tell us?

Did what was evil in the sight of the Lord God just like his father did. For all of his efforts for all of his I messed up y'all need to hey let's not do this hey we have to go back to this for all of those things that he did at the end of his life that we find in 2nd Chronicles you can't restore what you've spent

so long tearing down.

Your sin has an enduring impact. There's forgiveness there's restoration there's renewal we're on this side of the cross he can cast it into the sea of forgetfulness that's an Old Testament passage as well he can make it go as far as the east is from the west he can in eternity but in history the impact of sin remains.

and we just we can't overcome that. I've read so many so many biographies of people who've been snatched literally out of the pit of hell as it tells us in the New Testament their clothes even smelling from the stench great testimony to the mercy and goodness and faithfulness of Christ but each one of them will tell you but I can never overcome everything already did because the new life is lived out presently but the effect of what we've already done can't be undone we praise God for his mercy we praise God for his forgiveness and we don't want to ever belittle that but we also don't want to use it as a crutch and say well look Manasseh repented everything ended up okay with him no it didn't a hundred years later when they're going into captivity guess who's blamed

Manasseh right Jeremiah the next prophet to arise who is there when the Babylonians come in the weeping prophet the people are crying out to him wanting to hear a word from the Lord and Jeremiah is told by God don't listen to him I have nothing to say to them because of the sins of Manasseh the very one who restored him the very one who allowed him to go back also knew the lasting impact of his sin we need to understand this there is an enduring impact of sin the mercy of God is greater than the sin of men yes his restoration is available but we can't belittle the fact that there are wages for sin I mean Adam and Eve is a great testimony of that right they're restored they're redeemed God skins the animal clothes them but the wages of sin is death and guess what they die the enduring impact of what they did came about he still died so we see here that Manasseh is the tipping point of judgment

[24 : 49] I know I made my way through this very quickly and I needed to but he is the tipping point of judgment what they have been doing since they left Egypt finds its culmination in Manasseh and from this point on there's no going back oh they're going to find the book Josiah they'll find the book we rejoice because they find the book right and they open up the book and they see what God has to say to them but guess what they're already going friend don't get to the tipping point don't get to the tipping point because there are times where it's gone too far and we see it recorded for us here in 2 Kings chapter 21 2 Kings

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[28 : 17] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.